



NCARNG Weekly Safety Newsletter



February 20, 2015

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Sleep tight...

Dont Let the Bed Bugs Bite!!

The common bed bug has long been a pest – feeding on blood, causing itchy bites and generally irritating their human hosts. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) all consider bed bugs a public health pest. However, unlike most public health pests, bed bugs are not known to transmit or spread disease. They can, however, cause other public health issues, so it's important to pay close attention to preventing and controlling bed bugs. Experts believe the recent increase in bed bugs in the United States may be due to more travel, lack of knowledge about preventing infestations, increased resistance of bed bugs to pesticides, and ineffective pest control practices. The good news is that there are ways to control bed bugs. Getting good, solid information is the first step in both prevention and control.

Symptoms and Signs of Bed Bugs and their Bites

- Redness, swelling, or itching
- Small, flat, or raised bumps on the skin
- Tendency to find several bites together in a row
- Rusty or reddish stains on bed sheets or mattresses caused by bed bugs being crushed.
- Eggs and eggshells, which are tiny (about 1mm) and pale yellow skins that nymphs shed as they grow larger.
- Bed bugs secrete odors from their glands and often leave dark fecal spots on bed sheets where they hide out

A few simple precautions can help prevent bed bug infestation in your home

- Check secondhand furniture, beds, and couches for any signs of bed bug infestation before bringing them home.
- Use a protective cover that encases mattresses and box springs and eliminates many hiding spots. The light color of the encasement makes bed bugs easier to see. Be sure to purchase a high quality encasement that will resist tearing and check the encasements regularly for holes.
- Reduce clutter in your home to reduce hiding places for bed bugs.
- Vacuum frequently to remove any successful hitchhikers.
- Be vigilant when using shared laundry facilities. Transport items to be washed in plastic bags and remove from dryer directly into bag and fold at home.

Tips while Traveling to avoid Bed Bugs

- Before traveling, visit www.bedbugregistry.com to ensure the hotel you will be staying isn't on the list
- Use luggage racks provided instead of putting luggage on beds
- Inspect beds sheets for visible pepper-looking spots
- Carefully inspect your items paying attention to cracks, crevices, seams, and folds.

How to take care of Bed Bug Bites

- Steroid creams or oral antihistamines can be used for severe itching
- If bites become infected, use of antibiotics may be required

**For more information on Bed Bugs visit www2.epa.gov/bedbugs





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Guard Those Pearly Whites

Poor oral health can result in pain and costly dentist's bills. The good news is that most oral health issues are preventable. A simple brushing, flossing, and rinsing routine and routine dental check-ups can help stop aching jaws, nasty gum disease, and other oral health concerns before they start.

GENTLE BRUSHING ONLY

Proper brushing technique involves more than grabbing a toothbrush, squirting on toothpaste, and sudsing up your mouth.

What to buy: Dentists recommend using a soft-bristled toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste. Look for the "soft" marking—as opposed to "medium" or "hard"—on toothbrush packaging. That goes for electric and battery-operated toothbrushes, as well.

Work it: Plan to brush your teeth for at least two minutes, twice each day. Keep in mind: you want to brush—not scrub—your teeth and gums. Brushing with too much force will irritate and potentially damage your gums. Go tooth by tooth, one at a time, all the way around the outside, inside and top surfaces of your teeth. Brush your gums as well as your teeth, just make sure to be gentle.

Buy a new toothbrush or replace the head on your electric or battery-operated toothbrush every three to four months. Get one sooner if bristles become worn.

FLOSSING ISN'T OPTIONAL

You cannot reach the tight gaps between your teeth or under your gums by brushing alone. Flossing is necessary to clean the food and plaque trapped in these hard-to-reach places.

What to buy: Dentists will tell you the best floss to buy is the one you'll use daily—whether nylon, waxed or bacon-flavored.

Work it: Break off a strand roughly 18 inches long and wind it around your middle fingers, leaving a gap of an inch or so to clean. Use your thumbs and forefingers and a gentle back-and-forth motion to get the floss between your teeth. Gently slip the floss under the gum line. Then pull the floss from the gum line to the top of each side of every tooth. The motion scrapes off plaque. Unwind to fresh floss as you go.



RINSE AWAY YOUR TROUBLES

You can help keep your mouth cleaner by using an antibacterial mouth rinse after you brush and floss.

What to buy: Buy mouth rinse that has the American Dental Association seal of approval on its packaging. This means it's been shown to be effective at killing the bacteria that cause gingivitis. Leave anything labeled "mouthwash" or "pre-brushing rinse" on the shelf. These products may do more harm than good.

Work it: Swish a half ounce, no more than twice daily. Swish vigorously around your mouth for two minutes. Move the fluid all around your mouth to rinse every tooth, as well as your gums and tongue.



WHEN TO SEE A DENTIST

Visit your dentist for cleanings and exams twice a year. Contact a dentist between regular visits if you notice:

- Red, tender, or swollen gums
- Blood when you brush or floss
- Gums pulling away from your teeth or loose teeth
- Changes in the way your top and bottom teeth align with each other
- Unusual tooth sensitivity to hot and cold

**For more information on Dental Health visit <http://www.guardyourhealth.com/health-topics/dental-health/>